

MAY 18 2000

THE BAPTIST Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
901 COMMERCE ST STE 401
NASHVILLE TN 37203-3620
CARRIER ROUTE 39
005-DTN 5-04
SD000

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

MAY 4, 2000

VOL. 124

No. 13

Membership back on track after '98 dip

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Membership in Southern Baptist churches registered an increase in 1999, after the 1998 total that marked the first decline since 1926.

The new total of 15,851,756 is an increase of 122,400 or 0.78%, according to figures from the Annual Church Profile (ACP).

Baptisms registered an increase of 12,078 or 2.97%, for the third consecutive year of baptisms above 400,000. The 1999 total of 419,342 tops the 1997 total of 412,027 and the 1998 total of 407,264.

In spite of the increase in Southern Baptist church membership, the 15.8 million total remains slightly below the all-time high of 15,891,514 members reported in 1997.

The ACP is compiled by LifeWay Christian Resources of

the Southern Baptist Convention from church reports routed through local Baptist associations and state conventions.

Cliff Tharp, constituent information coordinator at LifeWay, said he feels last year's membership decline "likely was impacted by affiliation and data collection issues."

"With an increasing trend of churches moving away from traditional affiliation patterns toward greater variety in their affiliations, we have found greater challenges in seeing that everyone is counted and counted only once," Tharp observed.

Similarly, he said this year's totals for three areas — Discipleship Training, Woman's Missionary Union, and Brotherhood — have been

affected by submission by some state conventions of data that is not comparable to ACP criteria.

In addition to church membership and baptisms, other increases were reported in total tithes and offerings and special gifts, \$7,259,074,765, a 5.38% increase. Of that amount, undesignated receipts totaled \$5,607,034,479, an increase of 3.43%. Total receipts were \$7,772,452,961, a 4.30% increase.

Sunday morning worship attendance increased 0.36% from 5,398,692 in 1998 to 5,418,348 in 1999.

Sunday School enrollment dropped slightly from 1998's total of 8,147,939 to 8,147,457 for 1999, a 0.01% decrease.

Music ministry enrollment/participation dropped by 165,643 persons or 9.04% to a total of 1,666,949.

The three areas affected by differences in reporting methods among some states showed declines, with totals possibly affected by those methods:

- Discipleship Training enrollment/participation dropped 51,316 or 22.12% to 1,976,309. The 1998 total of 2,537,625 was the highest enrollment for the program since 1965.

- Woman's Missionary Union enrollment declined by 81,705 or 8.24% to 909,527.

- Brotherhood enrollment/participation for 1999 was 445,057, down by 80,598 or 15.33%.

Totals in two categories — value of church property and church-type missions operated by churches — also represented decreases from 1998, but data were not reported by all states.

Southern Baptist Church Statistics

Item/Statistic	Final 1999	Final 1998	Numeric Change	Percent Change
State Conventions	39	38	1	2.63%
Associations	1,201	1,212	-11	-0.91%
Churches	41,099	40,870	229	0.56%
Total Membership	15,851,756	15,729,356	122,400	0.78%
Baptisms	419,342	407,264	12,078	2.97%
Ratio of Baptisms: Total Membership	1:38	1:39		
Other Additions	468,723	466,635	2,088	0.45%
Sunday School Enrollment	8,147,457	8,147,939	-482	-0.01%
Discipleship Training Enrollment/Participation (1)	1,976,309	2,537,625	-561,316	-22.12%
Music Ministry Enrollment/Participation	1,666,949	1,832,592	-165,643	-9.04%
WMU Enrollment (2)	909,527	991,232	-81,705	-8.24%
Brotherhood Enrollment/Participation (3)	445,057	525,655	-80,598	-15.33%
Total Tithes, Offerings, & Special Gifts	\$7,259,074,765	\$6,888,796,898	\$370,277,867	5.38%
Undesignated Receipts	\$5,607,034,479	\$5,421,234,605	\$185,799,874	3.43%
Total Receipts	\$7,772,452,961	\$7,452,098,393	\$320,354,568	4.30%
Total Mission Expenditures (4)	\$795,207,316	\$953,491,003	-\$158,283,687	-16.60%
Value Church Property (5)	\$27,169,793,830	\$29,092,611,182	-\$1,922,817,352	-6.61%
AM Worship Attendance	5,418,348	5,398,692	19,656	0.36%
Church-type Missions Operated by Churches (6)	3,757	3,848	-91	-2.36%
Num. Churches Giving to Assoc. on % Basis	(7)	NA		
Num. Churches with Ongoing Intercessory Prayer	(8)	NA		

- (1) Comparable data not submitted by AL.
(2) Comparable data not submitted by IL.
(3) Comparable data not submitted by AL and IL.
(4) Data not reported by AL and SC.
(5) Data not reported by SC, IL, or GA.
(6) Data not reported by BGCT, SC, IL, GA, FL, or AL.
(7) Data not reported in 1999.
(8) Data not reported in 1999.

Prepared by:
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April 5, 2000

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Bible Drills held

4

Directions

5

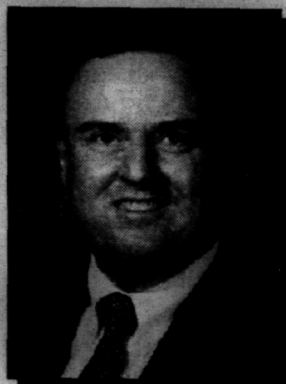
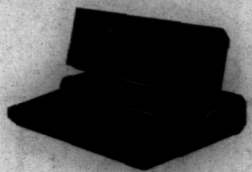
BCV receives gift

8

Letters to the editor

9

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VOLUME 124 NUMBER 13
(ISSN-0005-5778)

Published weekly except weeks of July 4 and Christmas by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, 515 Mississippi Street, Jackson, MS 39201. Subscription \$8.35 per year payable in advance. Economy plans available for cooperating Mississippi churches. Periodicals postage paid at Jackson, MS. Member, Association of State Baptist Papers. Deadlines: News items — one calendar week prior to requested publication date. Advertising — two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date.

Courage to free the enslaved

Before David Sherman quit after 14 years of managing "gentlemen's clubs" across the Midwest, he had seduced a lot of young women into the hellish life of a stripper, but three of them haunt him to this day.

She was a pretty, intelligent twenty-year-old girl who came into the business as a waitress. She was, from what I could see, from the upper middle class and a loving Christian family. She attended Bowling Green State University in Ohio and was fluent in several languages plus carried a 3.8 grade point average. She soon became interested in stripping. She started dancing and very quickly got caught up in the lifestyle of drugs, alcoholism, and lesbianism. I watched her life deteriorate for about two years. She has, as far as I know, gone on to graduate from school. But, still after five years, has not left this subculture and only fallen deeper into it.

This young lady was also a nice, nineteen-year-old pharmacy major at the University of Toledo in Ohio. She too started as a waitress and soon converted to dancing. Her family was from Cleveland paying all of her schooling and housing. She was from a wealthy family who owned several businesses from construction to restaurants. After about eight months, her family found out what she was doing and did everything in their power to get her to quit. But by this time, she was making enough money and doing enough drugs to think she could handle life on her own. Her family lost all contact, and she lost all control. She disappeared into this subculture and I haven't heard of her since, and that has been over three years ago.

Another young victim was a medical student from the University of Toledo. Her husband of only a couple of weeks worked in one of these adult clubs. Being newlyweds, they needed money but she did not want to dance. Soon

after waitressing, she easily converted to dancing. The life quickly consumed her. She moved to St. Louis for her medical career but soon quit school and started dancing at a club there. Divorce quickly followed, and she went on to California doing drugs and making XXX films. I recently learned she has contracted AIDS after about two years in the pornography film business and is now working in a fast food restaurant in San Diego.

On January 12, Sherman testified about the young women before the Michigan House of Representatives' Ethics and Constitutional Law Committee. His complete testimony can be found on the web site of the American Decency Association (www.americandecency.org).

Sherman described for Michigan legislators the process of luring reluctant young women into the netherworld of stripping. The process begins by hiring the young women as waitresses and bartenders, assuring them they won't have to strip. Then comes the pressure to help out by dancing when his regular strippers don't show up (a lie).

If the victim is hesitant to take the stage, she is threatened with the loss of her job. Because she is probably single and poor — and in all likelihood a single, poor mother — she feels she has no choice but to give in.

From there, it's a short trip to the entrapment that leads to sex acts for money, addictions to anesthetize the disgrace, and separation from loved ones.

"Now, the dancers are truly caught in the adult scene. With friends and family gone from their lives, they exist alone in this dark subculture of sex, drugs, alcohol, and prostitution. All this perverse living, to the dancer, is now just part of her normal lifestyle."

Sherman goes on in his testimony to detail how strip clubs evade taxes, launder money, and dodge court orders, but for now just consider the human toll.



As with the gambling apologists and alcohol merchants before them, we are continually assured of the benefits of allowing these activities in our communities. We are asked to consider the uplifting effects on jobs, taxes, and the local economy.

We are told that all are signs of urban sophistication, and anyone who dares speak up in protest is a backwoods hayseed or — worse still — a religious nut.

Perhaps we should let them know that we don't need their filthy lucre, that we wear their insults as a badge of honor for the One who wore a crown of dishonor for us, and that we have been empowered to lead the downcast and enslaved to freedom.

With a new strip club opening somewhere in Mississippi seemingly every week, we have ample opportunities to prove we mean it.

All we need is the courage to do so.

GUEST OPINION:

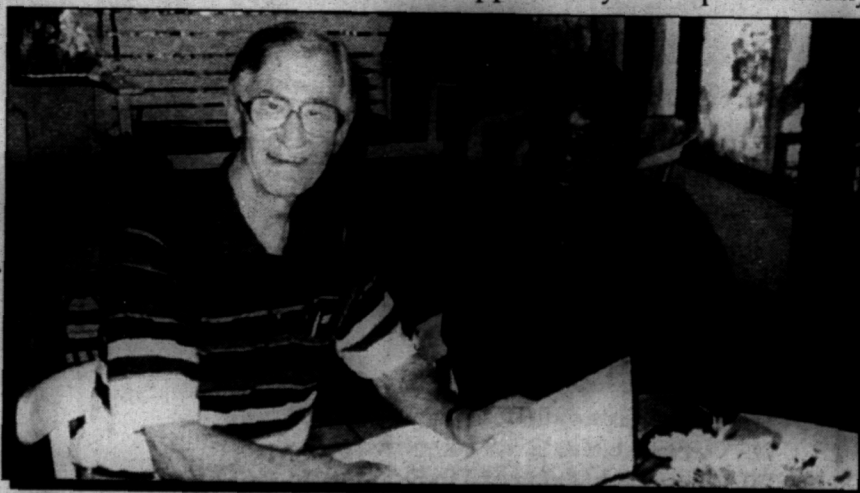
Hymnals for Africa

By Jimmy McCaleb, consultant, Church Music Dept.
Miss. Baptist Convention Board

the 20th century North America became the main base for Christianity.

Now, Christians in the Third World are beginning to outnumber those in Europe and North America. In this 21st century (if current trends continue) Africa and Latin America will be the major centers of world Christian strength."

If this becomes a reality, Davidson may be afforded the opportunity to help train many



PLANNING COURSE — Jimmy McCaleb (left), consults with I.J. Varison, music instructor at the Baptist Seminary in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. McCaleb was invited to the seminary earlier this year to teach a course in church music. (BR special photo)

of the church musicians of Africa for years to come.

What a help our 1991 hymnals could be! Just think how greatly one's theology is shaped by the hymns we know.

For me, supplying 5,000 hymnals for our fellow Baptist musicians at the seminary in Nigeria has become more than a challenge. It is a priority — a commitment to ministry.

The Christian music department at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond are hoping this project will reach fruition.

Logistics are in place to send the 5,000 hymnals by air cargo from Nashville to Lagos, Nigeria. From there, Davidson and his students will transport their precious cargo three-and-a-half hours to the seminary.

I say, Get ready! Get set! Let's go! Please pray with me, our missionaries, and the students that this project will materialize. To help make this important effort a success, please contact me at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

Through prayer, we will make it work!

Special outreach touching Wolof in NYC

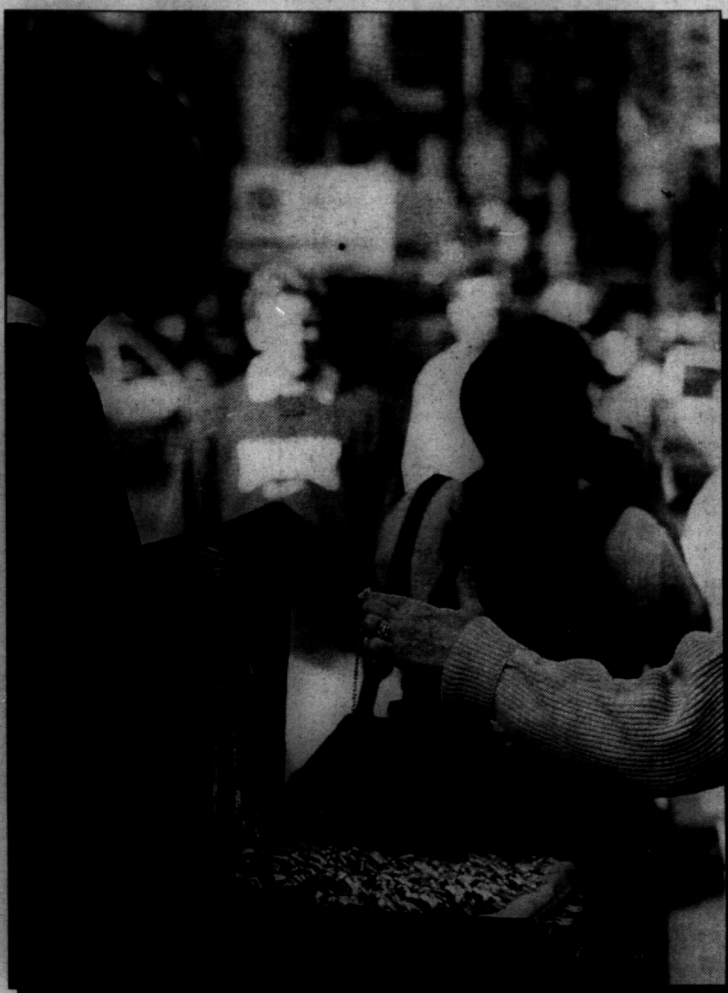
NEW YORK CITY (BP) — Harried New Yorkers brush past the street vendors without so much as a second glance at the knockoff watches and pirated videos the vendors offer. New Yorkers in Times Square are always in a hurry, the vendors will tell you. Only tourists stop to look, and they don't really want to talk.

So the peddlers were surprised when one woman does stop to talk with them — and astonished when she speaks in their native Wolof, the language of one of West Africa's largest unreached people groups. About three million Wolof live in Senegal and Gambia.

An estimated 30,000 Wolof immigrants live in New York City, most trying to earn money that will be sent back to Africa.

The Wolof are a hospitable people who observe a form of Islam mixed with traditional religious practices. They value relationships highly and will stop whatever they are doing to talk to a visitor — even if it means losing a sale to a wide-eyed tourist excited to find a "Gucci" wristwatch for only \$10.

A knot of Wolof vendors quickly encircles Tracey Dunnivant, a former missionary to West Africa who has come to New York to prayer-walk among the city's Wolof immigrants and ask God to open the door for the gospel



THE UNREACHED — In West Africa, 3 million Wolof are practically untouched by the gospel. However, those who have come to the United States — many of whom work as street vendors in New York City — may be a key to spreading the good news of God's love throughout that people group. (BP photo by Sandy King)

among them. Though missionaries have worked among the Wolof in West Africa for years, only about 50 have opened their hearts to the good news of God's love, and many of those keep their faith a secret for fear of persecution.

Dunnivant carries on an animated conversation with the peddlers for several minutes. They are immensely curious to learn why a white woman speaks their language with the accent of a West African bush villager. She takes the opportunity to explain how God called

her and her husband, Ben, to go live among the Wolof and tell them about God's love. The group listens in rapt attention.

Suddenly a battered Lincoln Continental pulls up to the curb, and the Wolof rush over to the car, leaving Dunnivant standing alone and open-mouthed on the corner. The young men take turns leaning in the window, greeting the man in the back seat, pressing his hand to their foreheads to receive his blessing.

The American who speaks their language is quite forgotten in the excitement.

The man in the car, it turns out, is a marabout, a Muslim religious leader believed to have spiritual insight and almost-magical powers to turn events in favor of his followers. He has come to New York from Touba, a city in Senegal that is home to the Mouride Brotherhood.

This Muslim sect dispatched the peddlers to America to earn money that will help finance Mouride programs and the great mosque in Touba, one of the world's largest and most lavish.

These peddlers have pledged their absolute loyalty to the marabout, and most of what they earn will go to him. In return he gives them his blessing, and they hope to earn merit that will cause Allah to look more favorably on them. Deep down, they know it's a vain hope that good deeds will outweigh their sin.

No one has ever told them Jesus died to pay the price of their sin and give them God's favor for free.

Tracey Dunnivant's 10-member prayerwalk team spent five days greeting the street vendors and praying for

them, giving "Jesus" videos and gospel cassettes to those who were willing to receive them. They also talked to Baptists in the city about reaching out to the Wolof and other unreached people groups represented there.

Missions strategists hope immigrants who accept Christ in America's cities will take the message of God's love back to their homelands, where God's Spirit can move powerfully among their family and friends. Cooperation in reaching the Wolof in New York City not only could advance God's kingdom overseas, it also might energize and mobilize New York churches in bringing their own city to Christ.

MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

**THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE**

Record
THE BAPTIST

PUBLISHED SINCE 1877

MAY 4, 2000

VOL. 124

NO. 13

For information on 2001PRAY, a movement to saturate the African continent with massive intercession on Aug. 3, 2001, e-mail 2001.pray@iname.com.

Editor's note: The names of the former missionaries to West Africa have been changed to protect present and future outreach to the Wolof people there.



Environmental pact set

WASHINGTON (BP) — Religious leaders issued two documents April 17 rejecting radical environmentalism and supporting a biblical approach to ecological stewardship. The statements, released at a Washington news conference the same week as the 30th anniversary of Earth Day, affirm God created human beings uniquely in contrast with the rest of his creation and has given them responsibility to care for and develop it. The documents also assert the welfare of human beings is an important factor in devising sound environmental policies.

In so doing, the documents refute some radical segments of environmentalism that consider animals equal to human beings and espouse worship of the earth.

"The Cornwall Declaration on Environmental Stewardship" has been endorsed by more than 1,000 people, including Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religious leaders, as well as academics. Nine religious conservatives signed onto "A Faith Community Commitment to the Environment and Our Children's Future."

Robert Sirico, president of the Action Institute, said at the news conference introducing the Cornwall statement the "welfare of people comes first... there is a clear distinction between the human race and all other living creatures."

"Reason and sound science are our concern, and this is what should guide our policies, not emotions, not high-decibel-level street theater or discredited predictions of global famine and resource depletion," he said.

Looking back

10 years ago

During a closed-door session that lasts more than four hours, Southern Seminary trustees debate responses to a 16-page document presented by trustee Jerry Johnson accusing seminary president Roy L. Honeycutt of "doctrinal infidelity."

20 years ago

The Spanish congregation at Broadmoor Church, Jackson, celebrates its fifth anniversary with dinner on the grounds. Special guests are Jack and Jean Glaze, former missionaries to Argentina; William and Jane Hickman, missionaries to Paraguay; and David Glaze, the church's first pastor.

50 years ago

To Mississippi goes the honor of having the first woman graduate of Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Helen Armstrong of Georgetown, who will receive the bachelor of divinity degree this month, is also the first woman to enroll in the history of the seminary.

INTERCEDING — Team members pray their way through the avenues and side streets of Manhattan, asking God to create opportunities for the gospel among New York City's Wolof population. Perhaps as many as 30,000 members of the unreached people group live in the city. (BP photo by Sandy King)

Analysis: Bible Drill program holds a key to future

I have been involved in youth ministry for some 17 years and God continues to

of with one local church and one community of students, it is with churches and students all over the state. It has been a privilege to work with and for you as Mississippi Baptists, and I thank God for you.

I have several responsibilities in my job, one I just recently completed for the year, that is really on my heart. That is Bible Drill. God blessed us

this year with a lot of 3,000 children and youth involved in Bible Drill. For this we in the Discipleship Training and Family Ministries Department are so grateful. Yet, as a youth minister, I wonder how many more children and youth could have been involved?

As a youth minister, I can tell you that the guys and girls in this ministry want students to come to know Christ and they also want these students to grow in their relationship with Christ. There are so many important things that we do to reach out to students, but the one thing you hear us talk about the most is the importance of God's Word. We teach it, we counsel with it, and we challenge our students to dig deeper into it and to have a daily quiet time.

Many Christian students do these things, but accountability is sometimes lacking. Since the Bible is so critical to one's relationship with Christ, what can be done to put stu-

dents into the Word, to dig deep, and learn with accountability? I have a suggestion

scripture, they learn doctrine, and they are challenged to go deeper. They will remember many of these verses 25 years later. I know this is true,

because I still remember verses that I learned when I was in Bible Drill some 25 years ago. I thank God that my parents challenged me, encouraged me, and taught me the Bible in Bible Drill at Noxapater years ago. I challenge you to provide the same opportunity to the children and youth in your church.

Sincerely,
Harvey Ellis,
consultant,
Discipleship Training
and Family Ministry
Department, MBCB



NINE-YEAR DRILLERS — Standing with Harvey Ellis, (right) consultant with the Discipleship Training/Family Ministries Department are recipients of certificates for nine years participation in Bible drill. Picture (from left) are Bryant Woods, Mt. Zion Church, Columbus; Corey Blackwell, Harmony Church, Louisville; and Charles May, Barton Church, Lucedale. (BR special photo)

teach me new aspects of this ministry that I love so much. I thank God for the calling that he gave, because I do love students and their families so much.

When I came to work for Mississippi Baptists, many people felt like I was getting out of youth ministry, or ministry altogether. Yet



JUNIOR WINNERS — Junior High Select Tournament winners standing with Harvey Ellis (center), consultant with the Discipleship Training/Family Ministries Department; are (from the left) Maegan Smith, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale; Bryan Martin, Rolling Hills Church, Carriere; Lauren McGinnis, Tyfertown Church, Tyfertown; and Dustin Gentry, Williamsville Church, Kosciusko. (BR special photo)

God has shown me on many occasions that I have opportunities to minister daily. Only, instead



SPEAKERS FINALISTS — The six finalists for the speakers tournament are: (from the left) Jami Lewis, Carriage Hills Church, Southaven; Jennifer Sandberg, First Church, Long Beach; Stephanie Bishop, Antioch Church, Union; Rob Dowdle, First Church, Columbus; Courtney Horton, Providence Church, Tiptonsville; and Karen Howell, Bethel Church, Brandon. Howell was awarded first place, Dowdle second, Lewis third, and Sandberg fourth. (Photo by Carl M. White)

to help churches, youth ministers, children's ministers, pastors, ministers of education, etc... What is that suggestion, you ask?

BIBLE DRILL! Yes, Bible Drill. Children and youth are challenged to learn the books of the Bible, scripture verses, doctrinal passages, Bible answers, and much more. It is a built-in ministry opportunity. All that we want to challenge our students to be and do is found in Bible drill. Students of the Discipleship Training/Family Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, they learn



FRIEND OF BIBLE DRILL — Receiving the Friend of Bible Drill award is Glenda Williamson (left) of Hope Church, Philadelphia. Presenting the award is Marcus Peagler, director of the Discipleship Training/Family Ministries Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. (BR special photo)

Vermont same-sex law may affect other states

MONTPELIER, Vt. (BP and local reports) — Vermont's governor on April 26 signed into law landmark legislation granting the full benefits of marriage to homosexual and lesbian couples in the state, prompting warnings from opponents that it could spawn similar legislation in other states.

Gov. Howard Dean signed the bill into law during a closed-door meeting with supporters following a 79-68 vote by the Vermont House on April 25 and a 19-11 Senate vote April 19.

"This is a statement that Vermont values people for who they are, not what they are," Dean said in a prepared speech following the signing. "This bill enriches not just the very small percentage of gay and lesbian Vermonters who take advantage of this partnership and get the rights that the court has determined that they are due. I believe this bill enriches all of us, as we look with new eyes at a group of people who have been outcasts for many, many generations."

Family groups believe Vermont's "civil unions" law will have a negative impact on the state and may be used to undermine marriage laws across the country.

"We hope at least to establish a residency requirement and broaden the bill so that it's not sex-based," Craig Bensen, vice president of Take It to the People, told CNSNews.com.

Take It to the People is one of the largest grassroots groups opposed to civil unions, with a membership of approximately 15,000.

Under the U.S. Constitution's full faith and credit clause, same-sex couples from out-of-state may use civil union certificates obtained in Vermont after July 1, when the bill goes into effect, to challenge marriage laws passed in other states.

However, Mississippi legislators in recent years have enacted measures that decline to recognize such arrangements legalized in other states. Those measures have not yet been challenged in court.

Robert Knight, of the Family Research Council, told the Rutland (Vt.) Herald, the new law will not help homosexuals.

"It creates the fiction that what they are doing is normal and healthy. It sends a message to young people that marriage-based families are irrelevant. It gives people a powerful reason to support other homosexual activist ideas — such as teaching children that homosexuality is the equivalent of marital love," Knight said.

"It also creates problems for the rest of the nation as gay couples will get their certificates and fan out to the other states and demand that these benefits be given to them where they live," Knight added.

Vincent McCarthy, a lawyer for the American Center for Law and Justice, agreed.

"I think there is a concern, justifiably so, that people in Vermont might try to take this decision to another state, seeking somehow to get another state to recognize the rights given in Vermont," he said.

NAMB appoints first 'cyber-missionaries'

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Siam Rogers, a telecommunications specialist who for five years has operated a ministry dedicated to sharing the gospel over the Internet, has been appointed as the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) first missionary devoted entirely to Internet evangelism.

Rogers, a resident of Sugar Hill, Ga., will begin serving May 1 as a national missionary with responsibilities for helping coordinate all of the agency's Internet evangelism efforts. Also appointed was his wife, Jennifer, who will serve in a family and church support role.

"Our historic entry into the cyber world with a missionary force is the recognition of the technology and computer community that has developed rapidly," said John Yarbrough, NAMB's vice president for evangelization. "Siam Rogers has been using this technology to share the gospel and train others to do so. He brings a passion for souls and a technological expertise to this task."

NAMB's Internet evangelism sites — to which churches are being encouraged to provide links from their own sites — have grown to more than 140,000 visitors spending at least eight minutes on one of the gospel presentations each month. Sites include [\[goodnews.org\]\(http://goodnews.org\), \[www.thekristo.com\]\(http://www.thekristo.com\), and \[www.kidzplace.org\]\(http://www.kidzplace.org\). An average of 200 each month make professions of faith in Christ and are referred to local churches for follow-up.](http://www.the-</p>
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"Individuals are sharing the gospel in chat rooms, emailing tracts and gospel presentation to friends, work associates, and family members," Yarbrough said, noting that he envisions on-line training and customizable tracts also made possible by the Internet. "We want to train, resource, and encourage the use of this powerful communication tool to share the gospel."

Since 1995 Rogers has operated AccessJesus (www.accessjesus.org), a ministry with Internet evangelism goals similar to those of NAMB.

Rogers said chat rooms have been one of the most successful forms of Internet evangelism, allowing conversations that eventually lead to opportunities for witness. He also sets up

and hosts prayer meetings and Bible studies through the chat rooms, which offer non-Christians a safe place to investigate Christianity.

He told of one young woman he led to Christ after two extended discussions in one chat room. She currently is a student at New Orleans Seminary.

In another case, he was leading a man

through the "Eternal Life" gospel tract produced by the NAMB when another man appeared and began asking questions. When Rogers later led the first man through the "sinner's prayer" over the Internet, the prayer was typed back by both men — indicating both had accepted Christ.

"That's just the power of a particular chat room," Rogers said. "You just don't know who's out there, and you don't know where the people are."

Rogers said he also has been helping people develop evangelistic websites, an area in which NAMB already has a strong base.

"The power of a website," he said, "is that while we're sleeping the Lord is out there using that to reach people who are looking for answers." Rogers received one e-mail at 3:30 a.m. from a man in Indonesia who had accepted Christ after viewing his site.

In describing the potential of the Internet, Rogers noted statistics on the number of years it took popular electronic media to reach 50 million users. Radio took 38 years, television took 13 and the personal computer took 16. For the same number of users, it took the Internet only four years. Because it is so flexible, he said, the opportunities it provides the Christian church are only beginning.

"The great opportunity is that the doors are wide open," he said.

Siam Rogers comes to NAMB from a position as project manager for Intermedia Communications in Atlanta, and he is currently pursuing a master of divinity degree from Luther Rice Seminary.



The Rogers

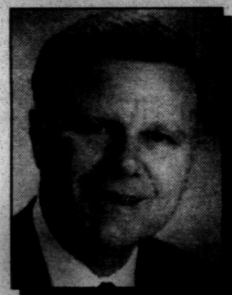
A WORLD APART

In the month of April, two states passed legislation that directly reflects not only family values, but also shows respect or disregard for Biblical teachings. Vermont passed, and the governor signed into law, a bill to permit couples of the same sex to have a "civil union." Basically, this is a law that allows homosexuals and lesbians to be joined as companions to enjoy the same rights, privileges, and legal standing as a married, heterosexual couple.

While this bill is historic, it is also bizarre! At the same time, and in the same month, the Mississippi Legislature passed, and the governor signed into law, a bill which prohibits homosexual or lesbian couples from adopting children in the state. It is an interesting contrast to see one state pass a law to strengthen and undergird a lifestyle, and then another state to say, through its legislation, that the perpetuation of that lifestyle is not proper. Ultimately the law was not against people who may be gay, but rather for the protection of the children.

During the weeks of legislative discussion and debate, two points of discussion came forward: It is impossible to legislate morality (I was told), and gay couples make good parents.

Concerning the first issue — that is absurd! Every day, in a civil society, we live in a world where laws are passed, almost daily, concerning honesty and truthfulness for proper moral



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

behavior and against improper actions. In the same vein, I was told that you cannot control human behavior, and that whatever someone did in his or her bedroom was of no concern to anyone else.

We may not fully be able to control human actions, but we continue to try. Drive down any highway in Mississippi and you will see speed limit signs and stop signs that are designed to protect us from others and others from us. Just in case that does not shape your behavior patterns, there are blue lights patrolling the roads both to encourage you to do right, and if you don't, to penalize you for doing wrong. We have laws that are intended to shape human behavior everywhere we turn: "underage drinking" laws; "too much drinking" laws; and, "don't abuse your kids" laws.

Concerning the second issue — God knew what he was doing when he made mamas and daddies to make babies and build homes. It may sound idealistic, but it is still true. Does that mean that good kids can't come from single parent homes? Of course they can! Single parents know all too well that it

would be better for a child to have a dad and a mom. The bulk of instructions in Scripture have to do not with the making of a child, but the raising of a child.

Children are best served when they are provided the role models, the mentoring, and the influencing that comes from both the dad and the mom. It is not just enough to tell a child how to live — it is vitally important for the child to see the strength, stability, help, and encouragement that comes from a mom who cares about her husband, and a dad who cares about his wife, and a mom and dad who care about the children.

It is important for us to keep in mind

that what some refer to as an "alternate lifestyle," is called perversion in the Bible. It is also important to keep in mind, according to Scripture, that when a society welcomes this lifestyle and gives it the stamp of approval of "acceptable," this is an indication that the society is in its last days.

I am grateful that our Mississippi lawmakers and governor were courageous and bold enough to take this right action!

Price to retire after 35 years at Ga. church

MARIETTA, Ga. (BP) — Native Mississippian Nelson L. Price, longtime pastor of Roswell Street Church, Marietta, Ga., and former Southern Baptist Convention vice-president, announced his retirement from the pulpit this November.

Price, 68, has been the senior pastor at Roswell Street Church since Nov. 1, 1965. Under his ministry, the suburban Atlanta congregation has grown to approximately 9,000 members.

In 1977, Price was invited to preach the inaugural message before President Jimmy Carter and his Cabinet. He has also preached the inaugural message for Georgia Gov. Joe Frank Harris.

Price is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University, New Orleans Seminary, Mercer University, and Hannibal-LaGrange College.

Porter welcomed to CAC



Members of the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) welcome new CAC executive director Jimmy Porter (second from left) with a plaque during a reception in his honor April 14 at the Baptist Building in Jackson. Standing with Porter are (from left) his wife Tommye Lynn; CAC chairman James Walters, pastor of Foxworth Church, Foxworth; and CAC members Norma Mackey of Waynesboro and Randy Rich, pastor of Prentiss Church, Prentiss. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

JUST FOR THE RECORD



The Lafayette/Marshall Association Mission Team 2000 traveled to Corumba, Brazil March 10-18. A team of 62 members from 24 different churches in the association built a church building in nine days. They also had a medical team, VBS team, and evangelistic team who ministered to the people in the community while the church was being built. Over 300 people were saved as a result of this mission trip. Plans are underway for another mission trip to Brazil in 2001.

The Department of Christian Education at Greater Mt. Calvary Church, Jackson, is now accepting applications for its Summer Enrichment Camp 2000. Camp dates are June 7-Aug. 4, 7 a.m.-6 p.m. Activities include arts and crafts and tutorial remedial education. For more information call (601) 352-8585.

David Fortenberry and Gene Hoyt of Outdoor Evangelistic Association, Amite, La., were speakers for the quarterly men's meeting at Panola Association on April 18. There were 58 in attendance and 13 recorded decisions for Christ. J. Courtney Selvy is director of missions.

Linwood Church, Union, held a note burning service on March 26, to celebrate paying off a debt for the new fellowship hall and parlor. Pictured (from left to right) are Mitchell Bounds and Clayton Hardy, church trustees. Stanley Barnett is interim pastor.



Noteburning service at Linwood Church, Union

Right to Life of Jackson will celebrate all Moms at its first annual Moms' Fest 2000 on May 6 at Lakeshore Park near the Ross Barnett. Activities begin at 7:30 a.m. and will conclude at 1 p.m. For more information, call Right to Life of Jackson at (601) 956-8636.

Williamsburg Church, Collins will host a Bible Conference May 10-14 at 7 p.m. Guest speakers are: Ricky Revette, Wed.; Martin Chasteen, Thurs.; Eugene Hayden, Fri.; Richard May, Sat.; Valton Douglas, Sun. morning worship; and Dennis Campbell, pastor, Sun. evening worship.

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On Sunday, April 9, Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland, presented awards to all children participating in the State Bible Drill the previous day. Pictured are (first row, from left) Molly Shackelford, teacher; Crystal Frey; Brandon Schmitt; Kaylin Rushing; Logan Griffith; (second row, from left) Trish Harbour, assistant teacher; Camie Farmer; Josh White; Cameron McDaniel; Channing Robbins. Not pictured are Elise Ros and Beth Thomas. Ed McDaniel is pastor.



Youth Bible Drill participants of Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland

On Sunday, April 9, Trace Ridge Church, Ridgeland, presented Youth Bible Drill awards. Pictured are (seated) Christopher Rives; (standing, from left) Kellen Farmer; Mallori Rushing; Heather Perry; Sandie Rives, teacher; and Kayla Ables. Not pictured is Collins Ros. Ables, Perry, and Christopher Rives participated in the State Bible Drill tournament on April 8. Ed McDaniel is pastor.

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HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

May 4, 2000

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Office of Communication.

2000 Senior Adult Retreats

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

"Finding Us Faithful"

May 15-17, May 18-20
May 22-26

Seminar topics include:

- Share Jesus without fear
- Strength for the journey
- Hugs, tugs & giggles
- Journey of faith
- Health issues
- Power of prayer
- Women's ministry
- Leadership

2000 Family Week

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

"Families Finding Faith"

July 3-7

Activities for all age groups!

2000 State Singles Retreat

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

May 27-29

Seminar topics include:

- Share Jesus without fear
- Strength for the journey
- Storytelling
- Power of faith
- Future trends
- Self image
- Leadership

For information on any of the above, contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department: 1-800-748-1651 or (601) 968-3800

Preaching and Worship Conference

May 8-9, 2000
Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada

Plenary Session Topics

- Preaching and Worship that Promotes Evangelism
- Preaching and Worship that Promotes Discipleship
- Preaching and Worship that Promotes Ministry
- Preaching and Worship that Promotes Fellowship
- Preaching and Worship that Promotes Worship

SCHEDULE

Monday, May 8

- 1:00 Registration
- 1:30 Welcome, Prayer and Housekeeping
- 1:40 Music
- 1:45 Session One
- 2:20 Music
- 2:30 Session Two
- 3:00 Break and Fellowship
- 3:30 Session Three
- 4:00 Transition to groups
- 4:05 Break-Out Groups I
- 5:00 Dinner on your own
- 6:30 Break-Out Groups II
- 7:30 Music
- 7:45 Session Four
- 8:15 Music
- 8:20 Session Five
- 9:00 Adjourn

Tuesday, May 9

- 8:30 Worship Experience
- 9:15 Session Six
- 10:00 Break
- 10:30 Breakout Groups III
- 11:35 Lunch at the Church (compliments CAPM)
- Dialogue with Conference Leaders
- Break-Out Groups IV
- 1:05 Transition
- 2:10 Music
- 2:15 Session Seven
- 3:00 Music
- 3:05 Session Eight
- 3:35 Adjourn... have a safe trip home!

Registration Form
Preaching and Worship Conference
May 8-9, 2000 • Emmanuel Baptist Church, Grenada

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Church _____ Association _____
Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Mail to: Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530.
Fax to: 601-714-7426 E-mail to: kgordon@mbcb.org

Please pre-register by May 1, 2000, so that adequate materials can be provided.

For additional information, contact Keith Gordon at 601-292-3307.

International Conference

Saturday, June 10
International Family Soccer Clinic
Food and other events
Atkins Village, Starkville

(Sponsored by BSU, Miss. State University,
Golden Triangle Association, and MBCB)

Contact the Discipleship and Family Ministry Department
for more information: 968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

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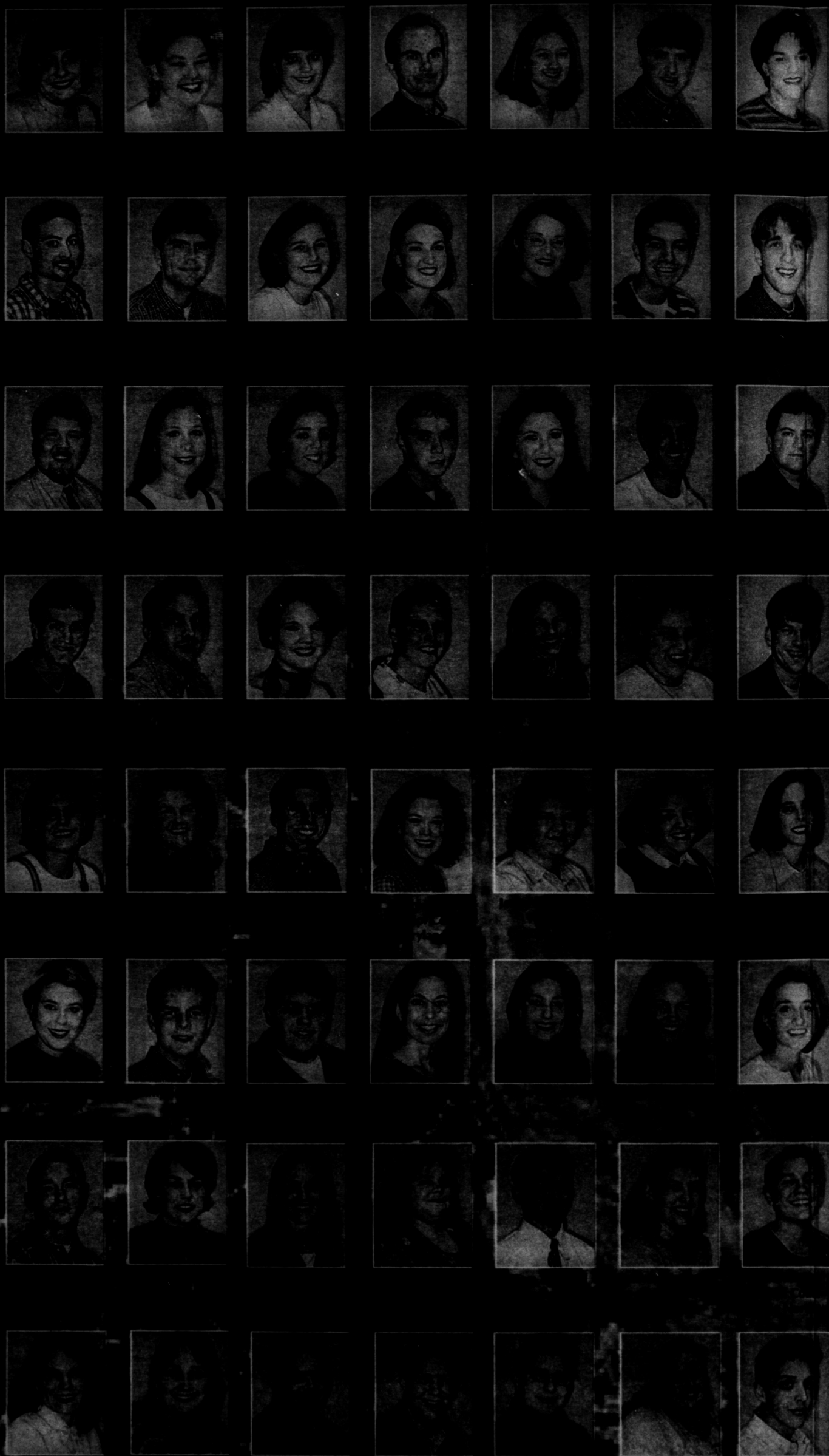
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Christian Home Week 7-14 (Discipleship & Family Ministry Emphasis). When our children hear us pray spontaneously for them, they know how special they are.

7

For (1) Preaching/Worship Conference, Emmanuel BC, Grenada (Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries). (2) Hugh Minefee is missionary for the San Carlos Association, Globe, Ariz. Pray for two missions there struggling to stay open. Pray for Hugh's back problem.

Mother's Day - Churches in Virginia have linked up to pray for travelers on I-81, one of the state's most congested and dangerous roads. Peter Mullen who started a prayer chain said, "The Lord's name is being used out there a great deal, but I don't think it's in prayer."

For (1) I Senior Adult Conference, Gulfshore Assembly (Discipleship & Family Ministry). (2) "Village B," in Malaysia, with a population of 12,000 has a Gospel Center. Fewer than 10 worshipers attend the Sunday evening worship service. Pray for these faithful few to receive God's encouragement.

For (1) Music Mississippi, Eagle Ridge Conference Center, Raymond (Church Music). (2) Pray for the state of Alaska which is 85% unchurched.

9

For (1) Associational Leadership Training, Ridgecrest BC, Madison (Missions Extension). (2) Please pray that the Burmese people in Myanmar will call upon God and seek Him with all their heart.

16

Missionary Shannon Ford writes that the "Jesus" film has been playing in 16 public theaters across Kiev, Ukraine, since April 12. Please pray that God's Spirit will bring conviction and salvation to the lost of Kiev who have viewed or will view this film.

Meningitis has struck an orphanage in the capital city of Mongolia, and it is now quarantined. It is not yet known which strain of meningitis infected the children, and the bacterial form can be deadly. Pray for all the little ones residing at this orphanage and for all exposed to it.

Missionary, Dale Warton writes: Sixty thousand comic books, "He Lived Among Us," are being distributed to Chinese people in northern Taiwan. Pray that those who receive the book will read it and find a new life in Christ.

For (1) II Senior Adult Conference, Gulfshore Assembly (Discipleship & Family Ministry). (2) Pray for President Vladimir Putin and other government officials of Russia.

18

For (1) Preschool/Children's Leadership Festival, Colonial Heights BC, Jackson (Discipleship & Family Ministry/Equipping Team). (2) Yazoo City Mission Blitz, FBC, Yazoo City (Discipleship & Family Ministry/Equipping Team). (3) Witnessing Through Media, Ridgecrest BC, Madison (DBS).

Last year a Missouri high school basketball team went to Grantown-on-Spey, Scotland. Missionaries Mark and Rozi Baker write: "An 11 year old girl here asked the Lord into her heart using the picture/tract of the basketball team with the plan of salvation on the back."

Missionaries have worked among the Wolof people in West Africa for years. Only about 50 have become Christians. An estimated 30,000 Wolof immigrants live in New York City. Pray for the team of Southern Baptists who pray their way through Manhattan streets witnessing to the Wolofs who are open to the gospel.

The 14-year-old daughter of missionaries Randy and Robin Covington is seeking to establish an involvement in a local orphanage in Khabarovsk, Russia. Pray that God will allow her and other fellow students to have the opportunity to share Jesus with the children.

Orlando Bound!

National WMU Annual Meeting and Missions Conference
Orlando, Fla.
June 9-13, 2000

Lodging will be at the Wyndham Orlando Resort. Saturday, June 10, you will be free to enjoy local Orlando attractions ON YOUR OWN. The WMU Annual Meeting begins on Sunday, June 11.

Training will be offered at an **ADDITIONAL COST OF \$35** per person. Participants **MUST** register for training to get the \$35 cost. Those registering at the door will pay \$55.

DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MAY 16

The cost per person includes transportation and lodging.

Contact the WMU for more information:
1-601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651.

Pastor & Wife Retreat

August 11-12, 2000 • Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Purpose: To provide a time of encouragement, inspiration and fellowship for pastors and wives. Please note that this retreat replaces the II Growing Churches Conference (church leader training).

Schedule:

Friday	
2:00-5:00 p.m.	Registration, Recreation and Fellowship
5:30 p.m.	Seafood Banquet Dinner
6:30-9:00 p.m.	Seminar and Worship Time
9:00 p.m.	Ice Cream and Fellowship
Saturday	
7:00 a.m.	Morning Watch on Pier
7:30 a.m.	Breakfast
8:30-9:30 a.m.	I Session for Pastors and Wives
9:30-10:00 a.m.	Break
10:00-11:00 a.m.	II Session for Pastors and Wives
11:15-noon	Worship
noon	Lunch
1:00-2:00 p.m.	Little Extra (for those who can stay)

Childcare:

Supervised care will be made available for preschoolers, children and youth.

Sponsored by: Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries Department, Matt Buckles, director. Call for more information: 1-800-748-1651 or (601) 968-3800

Please contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly to register

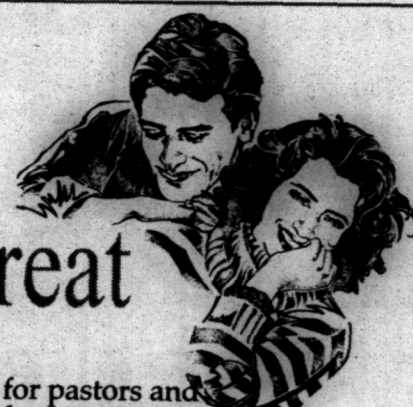
100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571.
Phone: 228-452-7261 Fax: 228-452-7263
MasterCard and Visa are accepted.

Reservation and Registration:

- Participation is limited to the first one hundred (100) couples that register for this retreat. This number is based on the available private accommodations at Gulfshore. A pastor may attend without his wife, but will be housed with other men in the remaining accommodations.
- Registration will be accepted only after March 1. You may use the 2000 Gulfshore Baptist Assembly Information brochure's registration form.

Cost:

Adults, \$43.50 Children ages 12 & up, \$21
Children ages 2-11, \$13.35
Full scholarships for pastors are available, but each will be responsible for the cost of his wife and/or children.



HOUSE TOPS

NAMES IN THE NEWS



Lucien Church, Brookhaven, held a deacon ordination service for Billy Paul Gill, Chad Laird, and Tim Ratcliff on April 9. Pictured (from left) are Chad Yarborough, pastor; Gill; Laird; and Ratcliff.

HOMECOMINGS

Union, Mayton: May 7; services, 10:45 a.m.; speaker will be Brent Bozeman, pastor; Travelers Quartet will provide afternoon entertainment.

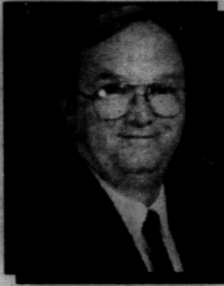
Salem, Preston: May 7; services, 10:45 a.m. followed by cover dish lunch; speaker will be Jerry Jones, pastor.

New Sight, Brookhaven: May 7; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; morning worship and note

burning ceremony, 10:50 a.m.; Noon, covered dish lunch in fellowship hall; Mike Davis, Slidell, La., guest speaker; Johnny Sykes, pastor.

Blue Mountain College will hold commencement exercises for its 127th annual session on Sunday, May 7 at 3 p.m. in the Modena Lowrey

Smith County native Ronald Purser, was recently awarded a doctorate of theology from Covington Seminary Theological Seminary in Rossville, Ga. He also received a master of theology from



Purser



Barnett and Smith

Covington Seminary and is a graduate of William Carey College. Purser has served as pastor of Wilkinson Memorial Church, Raleigh; Dinan Church, Tylertown; and is currently serving as pastor of Calhoun Church, Hot Coffee.

A deacon ordination service was held March 26 at Linwood Church, Neshoba Association, for Darron Smith. Joey Blount, chairman of deacons, gave the charge to the deacon candidate; Mike Smith, Neshoba Baptist Missionary, gave the charge to the church; and Stanley Barnett, interim pastor, delivered the ordination sermon. Pictured (from left) are Barnett and Smith.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Berry Auditorium. Featured speaker will be Jean Anderson Morgan of Swainsboro, Ga. Reserved seating is required. Baccalaureate service will be at 11 a.m. Kermit D. McGregor, pastor of First Church, Mendenhall, will be the guest speaker.

The first annual **Carrie Byrd Softball Camp - Fast Pitch Clinician Lineup**, will be held June 21-24 on the William Carey College Hattiesburg campus from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. each day. The camp is open to girls of all ages and skill levels. Applications may be obtained by calling (601) 582-6431 or write Carrie Byrd, William Carey College, 498 Tuscan Ave., Box 185, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

Cloyd Ezell, vice president of academic affairs at William Carey College, announced two new appointments in the School of Education and the School of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences. William Hetrick of Hattiesburg will be stepping down as dean of the School of Education and Psychology at the end of the summer. He will continue with the college as professor of education. Bonnie Holder of Madison, currently associate professor of education and chair of the Department of Education, will serve as interim dean. Randall Harris of Petal will be stepping down as interim dean of the School of Arts, Humanities, and Science at the end of the summer. Myron Noonkester of Hattiesburg, currently professor of history in the department in which he serves as chair, will now also serve as interim dean.



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

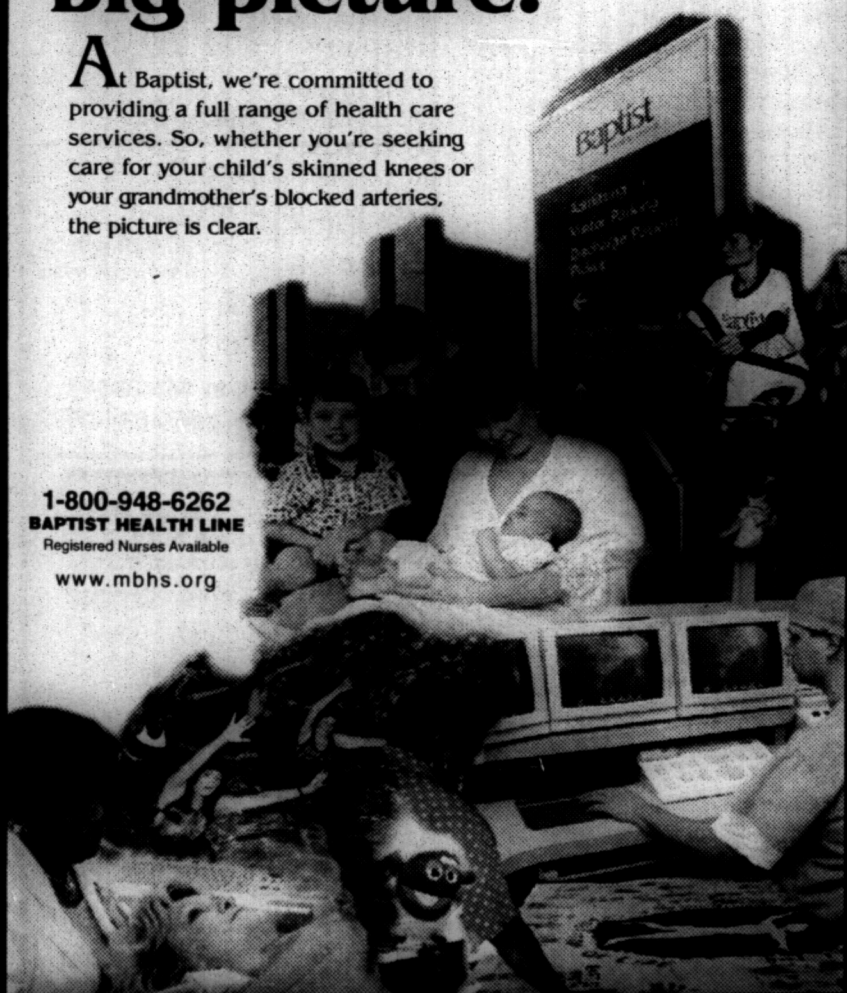
But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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BCV is recipient of million-dollar trust fund

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) — The Baptist Children's Village (BCV) is the beneficiary of a \$1,000,000 Charitable Remainder trust established by Henry and Daisy Barber of California. The trust was established in memory of Henry Barber's mother, Maggie Sykes Barber of Hazlehurst, who died in 1996.



Maggie Sykes Barber

Maggie Barber believed in the mission and ministry of BCV and Henry Barber thought the establishment of this trust would be a great way to honor the memory of his mother.

She was a member and Sunday School teacher for 37 years at Shady Grove Church, Copiah Association.

"We have an obligation to those that come after us to have the Children's Village in as sound and secure financial position as possible," said Ronny

Robinson, BCV executive director. "This trust will provide much needed financial support and security for the Village."

At the death of the Barbers, BCV will use the money from the trust for its general operating expenses and to handle basic needs of the children. At any given time the needs of children vary from medical and dental to educational to basic physical needs.

The following are examples of children whose needs have been met through such endowment gifts:

- Brooke has worked hard to break the destructive cycle in her family. Despite her lack of family support, she has high expectations of finishing high school early and pursuing a business degree at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg.

- Miranda came to BCV at the age of 14 with an extensive exotropid (lazy eye) condition, severe low self-esteem, and the devastating ridicule of her peers.

As a result of such charitable remainder trust gifts, Miranda was able to have corrective eye surgery.

Since her surgery, Miranda has blossomed and ventured out to accept new challenges including pursuing job opportunities. Such opportunities would not have been possible for Miranda without her increased self-confidence.

- Doctors who diagnosed Courtney with atrial septal (heart) defect were able to perform the necessary pericardial patch closure surgery because of just such extraordinary gifts.

As evidenced by Brooke's circumstances, funds can also be used for other exceptional needs like higher education, counseling, or travel expenses to visit family members.

At times even basic physical needs for children become extraordinary, as in the case of the 15-year-old boy who required a size 64 suit for Easter.

Birthday and Christmas gifts also help to meet basic emotional needs of children. The needs are as varied as the individual child. Obviously the true beneficiaries will

be the children since the trust will help the Village provide Christian love and support in the name of Jesus Christ.

Every day is an unexpected challenge for children and staff at BCV. Because of selfless individuals, these challenges become both bearable and even victories.

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation worked with the Barbers in establishing the Charitable Remainder Trust and is serving as trustee of the trust.

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation will manage the trust until the deaths of the Barbers and then will work with BCV in carrying out their wishes.

The Mississippi Baptist Foundation specializes in planned and deferred gifts such as Charitable Remainder Trust. Foundation services are available to anyone wishing to make a gift to a Mississippi Baptist or Southern Baptist causes or missions.

Because of the generosity of the Barbers, the memory of Maggie Sykes Barber will live on not only in the hearts of her family and friends but in the hearts of the children at BCV.

Maggie Sykes Barber is survived by children Carolyn Guynes of Hazlehurst, Laverne Little of Crystal Springs, Jerry Barber of Clinton, and Henry Barber of La Jolla, Calif.

For more information on BCV, contact Robinson at P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060. Telephone: (601) 922-2242.

For more information on the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, contact executive director Hal Fisher at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3211 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651. E-mail: hfisher@mbcb.org.

Former Army Ranger develops student ministry

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Scott Brawner did not always feel a call to youth ministry, but he knows what it is to be a troubled teenager.

Brawner, a master of Christian education student at Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, was once involved in a paramilitary group.

After high school, Brawner enlisted in the Army. "For three weeks, I tried to make it in my own power, but I failed," Brawner said. Kneeling in a bathroom stall one night, he recommitted his life to Christ.

"Throughout my enlistment, the Lord never left me," he said. Brawner completed Airborne School and the Ranger program and served in the First Ranger Battalion. While in Georgia, Brawner had begun serving as a youth minister at Glyndale Church in Brunswick, where he developed a vision for equipping

and empowering Christian young people to evangelize the lost and enhance their local church ministries.

The desire he and many of the teenagers expressed for intensive biblical and personal training, fervent prayer, and unique mission opportunities led Brawner to develop a ministry he calls Faithworks. "I realized that kids entering college don't know the Bible," Brawner said. "More Southern Baptist kids are converting to Mormonism than any other religion."

Faithworks is a multi-faceted ministry Brawner created "to equip and empower Christian young people to evangelize the lost and enhance their local church ministries through intensive biblical and personal training, fervent prayer, and unique missions opportunities worldwide."

The students also learn specific skills for a 15-day mission

project in another country. Students choose to work on teams with activities they enjoy such as drama/singing, puppets, sign language, sports, horses, camping/hiking, and carpentry/building. For two days, students apply the skills they learned in the United States at the Ground School.

Unique and challenging mission trips are just a part of what Faithworks does. They also offer year round discipleship ministries such as Disciple Now weekends, seminars, and small group settings. Another arm of the ministry, "Get off the Porch," challenges young adults and teens for what Brawner describes as "kingdom leadership" by

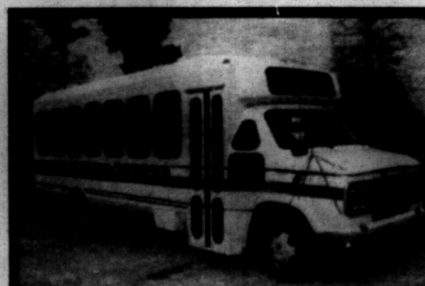
teaching the next generation of leaders to assume responsibilities in the local church.

For more information on Brawner's ministry, write to Faithworks, P.O. Box 14252, Kansas City, MO, 64152. Telephone: (816) 210-7925. E-mail: Faithworks2000@hotmail.com

Revival dates

Friendship East, Charleston: May 7-10; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Guy Hughes, Grenada, evangelist; J.G. Thomas, pastor.

Escatawpa, Escatawpa: May 7-10; Sunday 10:50 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; dinner on the grounds following morning worship; Mon. - Wed., 7:00 p.m.; Tim Posey, evangelist; Ronnie Cottingham, music.



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DEMISE OF A ROLE MODEL

Editor:

Recent events in the "Contemporary Christian Community" have upset me greatly. A woman with whom I practically "grew up" (musically speaking) has chosen to sacrifice her witness, lifestyle, and family at the altar of post-modern, "if it feels good, do it" individualism.

Amy Grant has been (at least in the past) a good role model of character, steadfastness, musical integrity, and creative innovation. Unfortunately, her role modeling days (at least for me) are over. The well-publicized breakup and divorce of the Amy Grant-Gary Chapman relationship, and subsequent remarriage of Amy Grant to country singer Vince Gill, are examples of an ugly sore that festers not only in the "Contemporary Christian Community," but in our churches as a whole.

One of the glaring statements that loomed large in the newspaper article concerning this marital event was the haste with which Grant

used the whipping belt of judgementalism to quell the outrage of those who might see this as another blow to the standards and precepts set forth by God. Also, the presiding minister over the wedding was the pastor of Grant. It is alarming to see such a blatant capitulation to this type of secular conformity in the pastorate, as well as in the laity.

A glorious ministry tool that once brought so many to an understanding of the love of Christ — Christian music — has become another vehicle of individualist excess for an entertainment-starved church that is all too willing to subjugate the worship of a holy God for the adoration of less perfect, unrepentive "heroes" with whom it more aptly identifies.

Glenn Padgett
Laurel

DETAILED REPORT NEEDED

Editor:

The two- to three-million-dollar budget shortfall at Mississippi College is due to

"sloppy" work over the years, President Todd reports. Maybe a better word would be "incompetent."

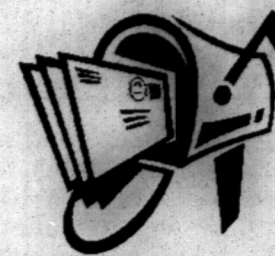
One would assume, after the Nobles debacle, that some rigid accounting procedures would have been put into place. Why were appropriate controls not in place before the fact, rather than after? Mississippi Baptists deserve a more detailed report on this multi-million dollar shortfall.

President Todd said he is taking responsibility for this "sloppy" work, and indeed he must. Would his sense of responsibility lead him to be willing to take a cut in his salary to assist in getting the college back on track?

More likely, some lower-echelon employees will be laid off, and deserving young people will have to pay the price for the "sloppy" and the unprofessional administration of the institution's finances.

Baptists of Mississippi expect and are entitled to better.

Haskel Stringer
Bay Springs



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Woman credits victory over disorders to Jesus

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP) — For 15 years, she suffered the effects of an illness, and she didn't even know she was sick.

Stacy Ousley was 30 years old before she sought help for eating disorders. At times both anorexic and bulimic, Ousley had successfully hidden her disorders from first her parents and then her husband.

She realized at age 20 that she had an eating problem, but it wasn't until 10 years later

while she was in counseling and going through a divorce that she shared for the first time about her eating disorders.

The revelation itself did not bring changes. Ousley attributes her admission to her counselor and her gradual victories to Jesus Christ. Though she had grown up in church and had been baptized at age 9, she said she didn't fully understand what Jesus had done for her on the cross until she was an adult.



VICTORIOUS — Former eating disorders sufferer Stacy Ousley invests herself in using her love for athletics to share the gospel. This year — as she did in 1998 — she plans to join a team going in August to Belarus. (BP photo by Stacey Hamby)

because I believed in God, but that didn't save me," she said.

"At age 27, I walked the aisle and got saved and baptized for real." Ousley is a member of Concord Church, Jefferson City, Mo.

Her salvation experience marked the turning point for her eating disorder.

"I finally told my counselor about my problem because I was growing as a Christian, and I started to understand I didn't have to beat myself up for having a disorder," she said. "As I grew spiritually, He was able to convict me of it. I could get help."

Today, as a certified health fitness instructor through the American College of Sports Medicine, she is a personal trainer for the YMCA in Jefferson City.

"I still have to manage my physical health and emotional health," she said. "I may be successful in coping every day, but I'm always in recovery."

"If I don't take care of myself emotionally, physically, and spiritually, I'll be back where I was in 1992 — all broken down."

Ousley admitted she is not successful every day in her efforts to control her disorder.

"I still have tendencies to binge eat," she said. "I have to stay strong spiritually through my prayer life," she said.

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LIFE AND WORK

Courage to stand

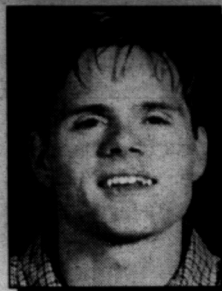
1 Samuel 17:8-11; 32-33 & 37-40; 45-47 & 50

By Matt Loving

How can you stand courageously for God when others oppose God's way? We live in a society in which Christianity faces increasing opposition; therefore, many are hesitant to talk openly about Christ or to base decisions on their Christian worldview for fear of being misunderstood. As we learn to daily seek the Lord, he can in turn begin to give us a proper perspective on our life's situations. Then, when we encounter circumstances that provide a way for us to stand up for God by word or deed, we will be able to approach the situation in a way

that honors and glorifies God instead of haphazardly reacting. David's life provides us with principles that can enable us to stand courageously for God and know that the Lord will enable us, as well as be honored in the process.

Don't let fear defeat you (vv. 8-11). In these verses Goliath is seen and heard by the Israelites. They are overwhelmed by his appearance and his constant degrading taunts. Verse 16 explains that Goliath had been antagonizing them for 40 days. Have you encountered someone in your life that constantly badgers you



Loving

about your faith in Christ? Those who oppose God's way often seem too powerful to withstand. We are called to walk by faith in the Lord and not by sight. God transcends any immediate concern or fear we have. If we will not trust him to protect us as we stand up for him against opposition, he will find someone who will.

Depend on God's help (vv. 32-33, 37-40). David came on the scene and was ready, willing, and able to defend the living God. Saul saw him as only an inexperienced boy. In verse 37, David in turn recounted past times that God had enabled him to defeat animals. He had previously depended upon the Lord for help in his daily challenges. His training to trust God prepared him for this

monumental challenge. It is also important to note that in verse 39b-40 David used the means that God had trained him to use to combat the enemy. The traditional means were not needed for the task.

Act in ways that honor God (vv. 45-47, 50). In these verses, David revealed that it is for God and by him that the victory would be had. Confronting those who oppose God's way should never be used as an opportunity to advance selfish or self-righteous aims. If we know that God is placing us in a situation in which he wants to use us to make him known to others, we must obey out of submission and only out of concern for glorifying him. We must always be humble before the Lord knowing that he holds our future in his hands and that no human being can truly help or hurt our lives apart from his providence.

In this passage we learn from David's example that it is through the trials of life that God increases our faith in him, thus resulting in him being honored and glorified. Les Hughes wrote that "our one purpose for living is to glorify God with our lives...my reputation is not important. God's is...when we care more about God's reputation than our own he will applaud us." (The Sound of God's Applause, p. 172-173). We may find comfort and confidence in the words of Psalm 118:6, 8 that state "the LORD is for me; I will not fear; what can man do to me...it is better to take refuge in the Lord than to trust in man." I want to challenge and encourage you to apply these principles from this familiar account.

Loving is minister of youth at Oak Hill Church, Poplarville.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Depending on the Lord

Judges 6:12-16; 7:2-3, 7, 20-22

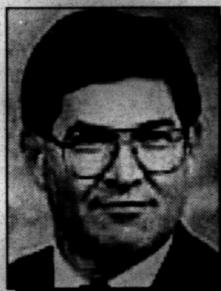
By Keith Smyser

Suddenly I was thrust into a major leadership position. The pastor of the church I was serving was killed in a car accident. This tragedy left Bob and me to provide leadership to the church. I was one year out of seminary at age twenty-three while Bob was a recent college graduate at age twenty-one. The church was in trouble with the two of us leading, for we felt totally inadequate! However, God worked in us and through us! It was totally and completely a God-size task. The Lord led the church and the two of us through a difficult time, bringing glory and honor to his name.

Gideon had leadership thrust upon him. As we study this week's lesson, we will learn how God leads those who feel inadequate to depend on the Lord.

Trust the Lord's power (6:12-16). We meet Gideon having a conversation with the angel of the Lord. Gideon struggled with his own inadequacy and wondered aloud why God had permitted Israel to be under Midian's hand.

The angel's description of Gideon in verse 12 ("mighty warrior") was nothing like how Gideon saw himself. God saw the man he would make and it was on that basis that the angel greeted Gideon (v12). Gideon



Smyser

was timid, inexperienced, hiding from the enemy, and working for his father. God using someone like Gideon can encourage everyone who struggles with feelings of inadequacy!

Gideon was reminded three times of God's promised presence! First, "The Lord is with you" in verse 12; second, "am I not sending you," in verse fourteen; and third "I will be with you" in verse sixteen. God provides what we need when we need it! Do you ever struggle with learning that lesson?

Depend only on the Lord (7:2-3). One of the problems with the Israelites and Christians today is that each want to depend upon what they can do in their own strength and power. God made it clear to Gideon that he wanted to reduce the size of the army so that Israel would not

boast that they defeated the Midianites. However, the people of Israel did not learn this lesson completely for in Judges 8:22-23 they gave Gideon credit for the victory. Why must we feel like we need to do something to "help God" rather than depend upon him alone?

Pride can push us away from God. Israel struggled often with pride. Fear can make us less dependent upon God as well. Twenty-two thousand men left Gideon's army because they were fearful. God was preparing the people for a glorious victory provided by no one but God!

Believe the Lord's Word (7:7). Can you imagine how Gideon felt? "You want me to use only three hundred men against Midian?" The same Gideon who needed two "fleeces" (6:36-40) signs from God now had to face his own fear and lack of belief. God made it clear by saying, "I will save you" and "give or deliver"

the Midianites into your hands. The words from God were verbs that stressed God's action and work. Someone once said, "If God says it, I believe it, and that settles it."

We can experience similar times in our lives. God may reduce our resources to almost nothing in order to prove that by his power alone we make it through those experiences! The promise of Scripture is that his strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Cor. 12:9).

Act in faith (7:20-22). The Lord gave Gideon an unusual battle plan! The act of simultaneously blowing the trumpets, smashing the pitchers, and holding the torches aloft gave the Midianites the impression that numerous enemies surrounded the camp. God gave Gideon's army victory! The people of Israel learned what could happen by obeying and depending upon God. How about you?

Smyser is associate pastor of First Church, Starkville.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

From sorrow to joy

2 Corinthians 1:1-2:17

By Neel Grantham

This passage gives instruction on church discipline. Discipline is necessary in all aspects of life. It is required of parents to help their children learn right from wrong. It is expected by Christians from their heavenly Father. Hebrews 12:11 points out that discipline is painful. It brings us sorrow. So when Paul taught the church to use discipline, and when that discipline was carried out, it caused grief for the church. It was painful.

The last part of Heb. 12:11 goes on to say that discipline from God produces a harvest of "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." So the one being

chastened goes from sorrow to joy. God is working in our lives for good. He is conforming us into the image of his son. When the disciplinary action of the church accomplishes the restoration of the believer, it is working as God's agent of discipline.

When the disciplined person shows signs of a repentant heart, the church then forgives and seeks to restore the broken relationship. The maturity of the believers will be demonstrated at this point.

Unfortunately, our churches are known for kicking people while they are down, rather than helping them back on their feet again. With the "Love Chapter" (1 Corinthians



Grantham

13) as the backdrop and Paul's instruction in this lesson, the church can carry out discipline and also be God's agent of restoration.

Let us not get too concerned about the recipient of the Corinthian churches' disciplinary action referred to in vv. 6-8 of today's lesson.

It could have been the man accused of incest in 1 Cor. 5:1-5. It possibly could be someone Paul seems to be defending himself against in 2 Cor. 12:8-2:3. The point is to lovingly discipline and lovingly restore.

Painful prescription (2:4-9). It was no easy thing for Paul to write to the Corinthians about church discipline. Neither should it ever be easy for the church and its leaders to discipline someone. It is out of love that true discipline takes place. Back in 1 Cor. 5:6-8, Paul uses the analo-

gy of leaven in the lump of dough. Leaven represents sin. If it is not cleaned out, it affects the whole lump. So for the sake of the sinner and the church as a whole, improper behavior must be confronted. Looking again at 1 Cor. 5 we see a list of sins that the church should give warning to and, if necessary, discipline (verse 11). If the warning or discipline is heeded and repentance takes place, then forgiveness, restoration, and encouragement should follow.

Pertinent principles (2:10-11). It would be contrary to Scripture not to forgive the repentant person. The principle of forgiveness must be applied in the church as well as the believer's life. If God can forgive, who do we think we are not to forgive? For the sake of the repentant person and the sake of the church, forgiveness must take place.

Some tend to distrust people who have caused problems

or committed certain sins. With the help of God, when forgiveness takes place, trust should be restored. The principle of forgiveness is a subject worthy of much study and prayer for all of us. God's standards are far greater than our own in this matter.

Powerful proclamation (2:12-17). The teachings in God's word are powerful. Paul was faithful to carry out the role of Apostle. As he started new churches, he taught them to be faithful to God's word. In doing so they were the sweet aroma of Christ to those he saved. To the perishing they would be the smell of death.

The main thing, though, was that the word of God was demonstrated in the life of the church and eternal life was proclaimed. We all should see our role as Paul did. We are sent by God.

Grantham is pastor of Pineview Church, Clinton.

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Mrs. Sally M. Watts
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Tours must be scheduled in advance.

Biker finds ministry among motorcycle buffs

Drop 'God' motto, court tells Ohio

CINCINNATI (BP) — The Sixth U.S. Court of Appeals ruled April 25 that Ohio's state motto, "With God, all things are possible," violates the U.S. Constitution and must be thrown out.

The federal court sided 2-1 with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which pressed the suit, contending the words had no secular purpose and appeared to be a government endorsement of the Christian religion. The lawsuit was originally filed by Matthew Peterson, a Presbyterian minister who objected to the state's use of the motto.

The motto was adopted by the state in 1959 and is taken from Matt. 19:26, a passage of Scripture that quotes Jesus, "... With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

The Ohio attorney general was reviewing the decision and had no immediate response, according to the Associated Press. The state could appeal the ruling to the full 13-judge appellate court or ask the Supreme Court to review the case.

Bibliocipher

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XKW PS WPRW VPRTT
XTRVPSFS RZRAHVW
WPS PGTQ ZPGVW PRWP
HSYSJ EGJZAYSHSVV, XKW
AV AH ORHZSJ GE
SWSJHRT ORFHRWAGH.

FRJC WPJSS: WLSHWQ-
HAHS

Clue: X = B

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Six: Forty-Five.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP) — As the general manager of a supply house, much of Gary Davis' job was delivering equipment. On his route he routinely delivered to three different shops — each owned by one of three brothers.

"One brother drank from lunch on, the second brother was rough, and the third brother was a total mess," Davis remembers.

One day Davis delivered equipment to the youngest brother and was surprised to see that he was clean and alert. A few weeks later when the man was still "clean and shiny and bright," Davis asked, "What happened to you?"

He told Davis he was getting to know who Jesus Christ was and had accepted Jesus as his Savior.

The answer didn't mean much to Davis, since as the child of a California real estate developer who grew up "doing anything but going to church on Sunday, although," he adds, "I did do Sunday School one summer when I was 5."

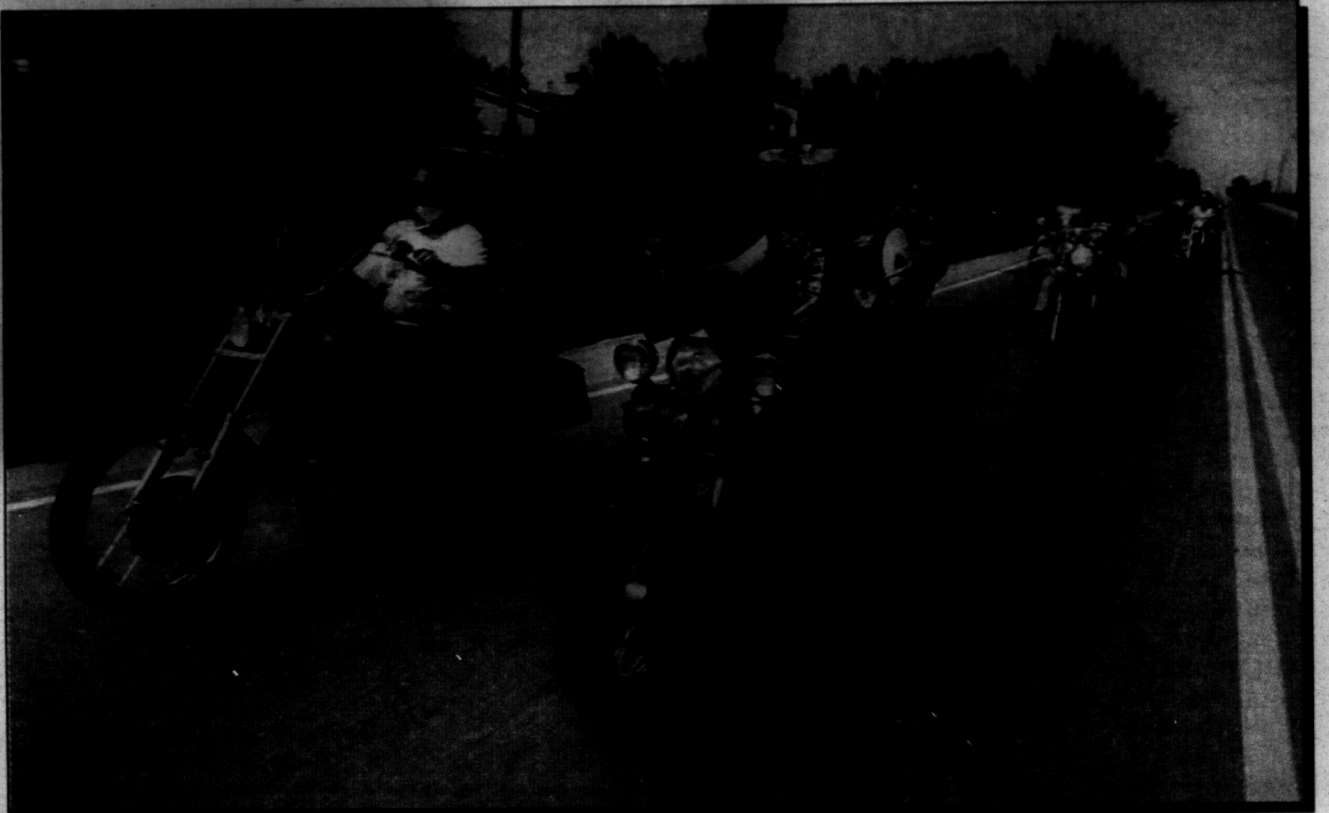
The two began to talk and when this younger brother began telling Davis about guys named Isaiah and Paul, Davis rearranged his schedule so he could take his break with the man and hear more stories about people in the Bible.

Davis was heavy into biking — he got his first Harley-Davidson right after high school — and was participating in mandatory runs for his biker club. "They had some evangelist there," he remembers.

When the evangelist said, "Someone here needs to know the Lord," Davis was among about 25 bikers who made professions of faith in Christ.

"My whole life changed," Davis says. He left the woman he was living with — "The Lord opened my eyes" — and not long after that he "literally walked out of that life."

The only thing he didn't leave behind was his love for motorcycles. He found a church that welcomed him, but wanted him to change. "You know, cut the hair, get rid of the bikes."



HEAVEN'S ANGELS — Motorcycling enthusiast Gary Davis (front right) is reaching an "unreachable" group of bikers through Church in the Wind, a Denver congregation focusing on bikers. (BP)photo by Richard Shock

Davis questioned that. Why does it make a difference? When one church member told him he wasn't putting forth the proper image for the church, Davis left.

"I didn't leave the Lord, but I was sure upset with his people," he says.

He tried other churches, but felt that his bike was a detriment to the way people saw him. Eventually, he found a Bible-teaching church where he was generally well accepted.

"I know I looked kind of tough riding the bike, but the Lord just didn't take it away," he says.

Then in 1994 Davis met with Rick Ferguson, pastor of Riverside Church in Denver. "We needed to find someone who understands bikers," Ferguson shared with Davis, to start an outreach to them. "That was me," Davis discovered.

He started a weekly Saturday night Bible study in his home that grew to about

25-30 bikers. He also began attending biker shows and rallies with his wife, Diana.

At the first biker show they attended, a girl stripped her clothes off right in front of them. "Diana wasn't convinced this is where we were supposed to be," Davis recalls. "She was a yuppie when I met her," he quips.

The couple persevered until Davis' life took an abrupt change. In 1996, he lost his job as an insurance adjuster. In the midst of that change, Davis set up a Riverside church-sponsored biker rally.

Two weeks later he used that event — about 100 bikers participated — to start Church in the Wind.

It was a place where "people know that they don't have to cut the hair, cover the tattoos, but can come to Jesus as they are," Davis says. "Jesus will help clean up the rough parts, clean you up on the inside."

Today Church in the Wind, with Davis as pastor, has an average attendance of about 100 bikers every Friday night. (And Diana has her own motorcycle.)

"We meet on Friday since most biker events are on Saturdays and Sundays. That means we're available to be at the major events and share the Lord with people," Davis explains.

The church also sponsors an annual Riverside Biker's Rally on the fourth Sunday in July. They play biker games in the church parking lot — like "Road Kill Toss" in which the driver rides as slowly as he can so the passenger can heave a stuffed animal in a garbage can as they pass by. Then the church feeds everyone a free steak lunch.

At Church in the Wind, Davis hopes to give the biker community what he found at Riverside: a place that understands grace, accepting people as they are.

"You know, we're all saved by grace," he says.

Reprinted from the Winter 2000 issue of Church Planting & Evangelism Today, published by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board.



TWO-WHEEL WITNESS — Motorcyclist Gary Davis (right) doesn't pass up an opportunity to provide a witness for Christ in the Colorado biker community, even stopping to talk with fellow bikers on the streets of town. (BP photo by Richard Shock)